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The need for the establishment of some social agency that shall be responsible for the attendance of the children at clinics for a long period of time was evident. Mothers cannot, in many instances, leave the home and neglect other children to make the many long and tedious trips necessary if the children are to be cured. More Municipal nurses are needed to give instruction in feeding and hygienic care. This is a direct community responsibility. The out-of-town children as a rule, had received no treatment, showing the great need for health work in isolated communities. The committee declare their work just begun. Taking account of stock has been illuminating and will be productive of far-reaching results in city and country alike.

As Heywood Broun said, "Orthopedic surgery is not beyond the need of advertising." By the way, it is singular that the foreign born, always the scapegoats, are so much more easily reached by the press than by word of mouth. It would be interesting to know how many of these children come from our native-born population. The question is fundamentally one of economics rather than nativity.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF STUDENT NURSES

BY EMILIE SARGENT, A.B., 1916; R.N., 1920

Detroit, Michigan

THE writer makes no claim as an authority on any phase of nursing education, but because of her deep interest in the subject presents her reflections on the social life of student nurses from the point of view of a recent graduate. The term social life is here conceived in its broadest sense as covering not only recreation, but all those contacts and experiences which create group initiative and loyalties.

There is no disputing the fact that the chief business of a nursing school is to teach students how to care for the sick in the most approved, scientific manner. As the apprentice age is past, we will assume that a standard school provides the adequate theoretical and practical training to enable its graduates to enter the field of their preference, that is, institutional, private duty or public health. And as there is always a goal to reach we would say that a standard school not only aims to produce skillful nurses, but socialized women as well.

The public has flung wide the door of opportunity to nurses to prove themselves the prime factors in making health the concern of the community rather than the business of the medical profession alone. There are over 11,000 public health nurses in the United States we are told by the National Organization for Public Health

Nursing, nor is this conception of the nurse in relation to the community health confined to public health nurses, for all nursing is social work and every nurse a health teacher.

Those nurses who are successfully meeting this new era of socialized health are generally doing so by the sheer force of their personalities triumphing over the painful trial and error method, whereas, had they previously been given fuller experience in team work, the task could be more easily accomplished. The nursing school can meet this situation, and in increasing numbers is meeting it, by including sociology and psychology in its curriculum, and by encouraging student organization.

Literary schools have always considered the social life of their students as being an important factor in a college education. It would seem equally as important a factor in nursing schools, perhaps more so because of the diversity of types to be found among nurses, that is, in age and educational contrasts. State laws vary in their age and educational requirements, as do also individual schools. However, the minimum requirements for admission to a nursing school are eighteen years of age and one year of high school education. Therefore, some applicants are admitted directly from school, while others enter after years in some other kind of work ranging the whole gamut of professions followed by women. In the writer's own class there were ex-clerks, ex-stenographers, an ex-dressmaker, an ex-actress, an ex-missionary, ex-teachers, ex-musicians, a group who had stayed at home, and a still larger group who had entered directly from high school and college.

Yet no matter how strikingly unlike in age and cultural advantages the members of any nursing school may be, their very presence denotes a common ideal, that of greater service. And what possibilities for stimulating friendships and mutual helpfulness exist in such a varied personnel! It is this goodfellowship which is the basis of unity and school loyalty and is, therefore, surely more valuable than rigid adherence to the "Seniority System" which should be forgotten in off-duty hours.

Every school provides some kind of entertainment for its nurses, if only an annual Christmas party, a reception following the graduation exercises,—and usually the Juniors give the Seniors a dance. In the last case, the planning and execution of the event are in the students' hands so that plus a good time, they get a lesson in team work, the purchasing of refreshments, selection of favors, decorations, music and the thousand and one little things that go to make up a real dance with all the trimmings, which is certainly invaluable experience for any group.

It has been the desire of nursing school executives to spare their busy nurses the time necessarily consumed in preparation for parties by assuming the responsibility themselves and thus overlooking the fact that there is much pleasure in the work of preparation as well as experience to be gained. We feel that it is this same motive which keeps many schools from encouraging student government. However, the eight-hour day has reduced so many difficulties that the plea of not wanting to add another burden to the nurses in their time off duty is hardly justifiable in the face of the value received by the student in having a voice in her government, for by so doing she is developing poise, constructive thinking, the faculty of ready expression, and the power to judge without bias.

The students' line of least resistance is placid acceptance of the rules decreed by the powers that be, and yet in such situations one may expect infringement on the letter of the law whenever possible, for the slogan is usually, "Rules are made to break," and the breaking becomes the passing jest. On the other hand, to have made those rules one's self and to be responsible for upholding them puts quite a different face on the matter,—infringement then is a point of honor. Therefore, the moral tone of a school is necessarily higher if the students have a voice in their governing than if they have none. Any girl who is not big enough to respond to an honor system is certainly not desirable material for a nurse, and after a fair trial, should be dropped from the school.

Furthermore, the disciplinarian function of self government is only a phase of its work, for it covers the social life of the student group as well. It organizes the student body, formulates public opinion, and is qualified to act upon any problems confronting the group, whether it be the kind of discipline to mete out to a refractory member or a decision as to the advantages of the formal dance versus the informal.

Some schools achieve a certain degree of group coöperation through their class organizations which, as far as it goes, is fine but usually in such cases, class spirit supersedes school spirit and decision on any pertinent question becomes difficult, for just as surely as the Seniors approve, the Juniors will disapprove.

We have talked with the members of several schools in which their own branches of the Young Women's Christian Association serve the purpose of student organizations and act as devotional, educational and social leaven. Those schools are to be congratulated upon the successful operation of their own Young Women's Christian Associations and if they fill the gap which always exists where there is no student organization, they have accomplished the same aim. We

are not in a position to judge, but our opinion is that the Young Women's Christian Association should be a product of the larger student organization and should not attempt to take its place.

Each school has to solve its own problems, but if it keeps abreast with the times it will emphasize the value of having its students actively interested in the administration of their own affairs in the off-duty hours. And you, student nurses of the present and the future, must be keenly alive to your privileges; you must realize that much of the responsibility of obtaining self government is yours, for if you do not ask for it, the executives of the training schools cannot give it to you. Self government is largely subjective and not objective and therefore can not be literally thrust down your throats; the administration can encourage you to inform yourselves of the action of student government in other places and give you the opportunity of making your own choice, but they will not compel you either to accept or reject it, for if they did it would not be self government.

There is always a bogey of some kind abroad to frighten young women from undertaking the nursing profession, the "old timers" alarm them with direful tales of rigid military discipline, which today, as a matter of fact, has almost vanished from our nursing schools; others harp on the hard work story, forgetting that since their day, marked improvement has been made in nursing education as well as in other educational fields. *We must disabuse the public mind of its false conception of the hardships endured by the student nurse and replace it with the knowledge that there are degrees of quality in nursing schools which necessitate careful discrimination on the part of the applicant.* No course is as vital to women as that offered by the nursing school. The extent of the student's realization of this fact will depend greatly upon her maturity and vision.

The recreational features, too, have been vastly enlarged. Many nursing schools are now equipped with excellent libraries for general reading as well as medical and nursing texts, a few boast of an auditorium with a stage to accommodate amateur dramatics and musicals; some have a gymnasium, swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts, while others, because of their close proximity, are able to make use of those recreational facilities already established; this is particularly true of the nursing school which functions as a department of a university. Another delightful attraction which some schools provide is a vacation cottage usually situated on a lake and accessible enough for week ends and days off duty.

Of course, recreational facilities are an expense and that is why they are not more extensively supplied. Some schools are fortunate enough to have this problem solved by pleasure endowments, that is,

some one vitally interested in the nurses' social welfare, contributes a sum to be used solely for recreational purposes.

A few schools have as a member of their staff a social director who serves entirely as an adviser and counsellor to the student body in their off duty hours, fulfilling in some respects the duties of a glorified information bureau, outlining desirable trips in and around the city, suggesting the worthwhile plays of the season, and indeed, answering the endless questions of the newcomer in a big city. She also, by virtue of her enthusiasm, stimulates interest in athletics, amateur dramatics, and music.

The reaction of the student group to a quickened, more intelligent interest in making the best use of their recreational hours, proves the success and need for such a person as the social director. It must also be a great relief to the already overburdened superintendent to feel that the direction of the social life of her school is in the hands of some one who has both the preparation and the time necessary for its furtherance.

While the model for any school is to provide the very best facilities for teaching nursing, for comfortable housing, and for recreational and cultural advantages, you students can do much for yourselves along the latter lines. Through your student organization you can promote athletics, dramatics, music and general sociability. You will find that the superintendents and principals of your schools will respond to your interest and suggestions for making the community life in the nurses' home count.

A Senior student was heard to say that in the three years of her training she had never approached her superintendent with a suggestion or question and she felt that her passivity was commendatory, but wrongly so, for the negative passive type of girl is as much out of favor in nursing schools as she is in college, business, or any live situation. If you seek it in the right spirit, you will always have the coöperation of the administration of your school. This point of view is most necessary, for you students of today will be the administrators of tomorrow.

The Vocational Department of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, now reestablished, has prepared a small poster for the bulletin boards of training schools and nurses' clubs. Numbers have already been sent out. These posters will be sent upon request to headquarters, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.